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PSYCHO

edited by ALAN HEWETSON
contributors

DAN ADKINS PAT BOYETTE
CESAR LOPEZ PABLO MARCOS
CHARLES McNAUGHTON
DOUG MOENCH SERGE MOREN
KEVIN PAGAN RALPH REESE
TOM SUTTON RAMON TORRENTS
DOUG WILDEY

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Join us on a HUNT in ancient Rome for the greatest of all HUMAN MONSTERS — the VAMPIRE — who, CORNERED in his VAULT, REFUSES to ADMIT DEFEAT . . . page 59

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MARY SHELLEY WHEN SHE WROTE MY BIOGRAPHY, CALLED HER WORK "FRANKENSTEIN" -- WHICH IS NOT MY NAME BUT THE NAME OF MY CREATOR...

-- SHE SUBTITLED HER BOOK: "THE MODERN PROMETHEUS" WHICH TO MY WAY OF THINKING IS QUITE A JOKE -- DO YOU KNOW WHO PROMETHEUS WAS?



"...PROMETHEUS WAS A GREEK GOD -- SOME SAY HE CREATED MAN BY FORMING AN IMAGE FROM THE CLAY AND WATER OF PHOEBUS, INTO WHICH ATHENA BREATHED LIFE -- HE CAUSED MAN, ALONE OF THE SUN AND THE MOON -- HE TAUGHT MEN NUMBERS AND ALPHABETS -- HOW TO BUILD SHIPS AND SAIL THE SEAS -- HOW TO WORK THE FIELDS AND TAME WILD ANIMALS -- PROMETHEUS TAUGHT MAN ALL HIS HUMAN ACTS..."



"...VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN IS NO PROMETHEUS, MODERN OR OTHERWISE. HE IS JUST A FOOL WHO DABBLED WITH IMAGINATION AND LOST. UNFORTUNATELY, I AM THE RESULTS OF HIS FAILURE..."



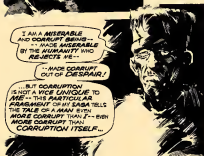
WELL -- DON'T YOU THINK IT WAS PRETTY FUNNY OF MARY SHELLEY TO CALL VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN THE MODERN PROMETHEUS? EHP?



I AM A MISERABLE AND CORRUPT BEING -- -- MADE MISERABLE BY THE HUMANITY WHO REJECTS ME --

-- MADE CORRUPT OUT OF DESPAIR!

...BUT CORRUPTION IS NOT A VICE UNIQUE TO ME -- THIS PARTICULAR FRAGMENT OF MY SAGA TELLS THE TALE OF A MAN EVEN MORE CORRUPT THAN I -- EVEN MORE CORRUPT THAN CORRUPTION ITSELF...



THE SAGA OF THE FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

...RUMANIA--BEFORE IT WAS RUMANIA--
WAS TRANSYLVANIA...

...DRACULA--BEFORE HE WAS DRACULA--
WAS A MAN...

BUT THE CARPATHIAN ALPS HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN THE CARPATHIAN ALPS--

BITTERLY TREACHEROUS AND FRAMING--CUTTING
INTO THE FIBER OF EVEN SUCH A MAN AS THIS, WHO
IS NO LONGER A MAN--BUT A HUMAN MONSTER
--BY HIS OWN ADMISSION...



...THE MAN-MONSTER HAS
BEEN FORCED BY POLICE AND
OUTRAGED CITIZENS TO
FLEE TO THESE CHILLING
HILLS, FORCED TO LIVE
WITHIN THEM A NOMADIC
LIFE--FOR THEY SEARCH HIM
OUT EVEN HERE, AND HAVE
REDUCED THIS MONSTER'S
STEEL NERVES TO BRITTLE
TIN NERVES...



...FRANKENSTEIN--
BEFORE HE WAS
FRANKENSTEIN--
WAS NOTHING!...

...HE GROVES ABOUT
THESE HILLS, AVOIDING
HUMAN CONTACT
THOUGH HE NEEDS
THE COMPANY OF
OTHERS MORE THAN
HE NEEDS
ANYTHING--HE
STALKS THE CAES AND
SPEAKS TO THE WILD
GOATS WHO DO NOT
SHUN HIM AS DO WILD
HUMAN'S SHUN HIM--
THEY CARE NOT HOW
THIS MAN LOOKS--THEY
CARE ONLY HOW HE
ACTS--AND HE IS A
KIND MAN...

WRITTEN BY ALAN BOWTREN
ILLUSTRATED BY OSCAR LOPEZ



...AND SO THE SAGA TAKES FORM AND SUBSTANCE--
EACH FRAGMENT TELLING THE TALE OF A DAY OR
TWO IN THE EVENTFUL LIFE OF THIS 'MONSTER'...

...IT IS WISE TO SHUDDER IN ANTICIPATION--
FOR THE EVENTS SOON TO UNFOLD IN THIS ROCK-
FACE ARE A FRAGMENT FRANKENSTEIN'S
MONSTER CHOOSES NOT TO RECALL--FOR AGAIN,
AND AGAIN,
AND AGAIN,
HE HEARD THE CRY

DIE, FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER!





...REST HERE TILL YOUR
LEGS HEALS -- I WILL TEND
AND FEED YOU TILL YOU
ARE BETTER...

...THEN BACK OUT YOU GO
TO YOUR WORLD OF NEVER
ENDING CLIMBING AND
WALKING ABOUT...

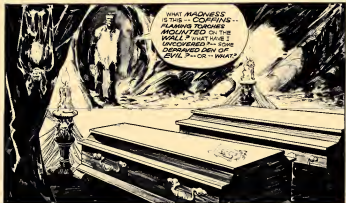
WE ARE NOT SO UNALIKE
THAT AN ANALOGY CANNOT
BE DRAWN...



...I TOO
WALK ABOUT ON
DANGEROUS
PLATEAUS-- ROUND
AND ROUND IN
CIRCLES...



THERE IS AN
UNUSUAL LIGHT
IN THIS PIT--
WHAT IS THE
SOURCE?



WHAT MADNESS
IS THIS -- COFFINS --
FLAMING TORCHES
MOUNTED ON THE
WALL? WHAT HAVE I
UNCOVERED? -- SOME
DEPRAVED DEN OF
EVIL? -- OR -- WHAT?







...TWO BEINGS SIT ON THE EDGE OF A MOUNTAIN TELLING TALES WE NEED NOT TELL HERE AGAIN, FOR THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD AND RE-TOLD A THOUSAND TIMES, AND ONLY TO THESE TWO BEINGS ARE THEY NEW.

...TWO BEINGS SIT ON THE EDGE OF A MOUNTAIN--NEITHER ONE IS HUMAN--YET ALL THEY SPEAK OF IS HUMANITY--

--HOW THEY LOATHE IT--

--HOW THEY HATE, DESPISE AND SOMEWHAT FEAR IT--

--AND WITH SO MANY CONSIDERENCES OF CIRCUMSTANCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL, ON WHICH THEY BASE AN ALL-THOUGHT-OUT LAISON--

--A FRIENDSHIP UNTESTED, AS ALL NEW FRIENDSHIPS ARE--



THIS IS LEAH.

--LEAH--YOU ARE THE ONE WHO ATTACKED MY NECK-- TRYING TO SAVE DRACULA FROM MY STRANGLEHOLD...

...I AM SORRY MY BLOOD DISGUSTED YOU-- YOU SEE, I AM NOT-AH-LIKE OTHER MEN, I DON'T BELIEVE MY BLOOD IS NORMAL...

YOU ARE SORRY? SORRY? YOU ARE CERTAINLY A DIFFERENT KIND OF MAN THAN ANY I HAVE KNOWN.

AH--WHAT MAY I CALL YOU?

I DO NOT HAVE A NAME--WOULD YOU GIVE ME A NAME -- I WOULD BE HONORED?

I CANNOT THINK OF A NAME THAT ALREADY EXISTS THAT WOULD DO YOU JUSTICE-- PERHAPS YOU WOULD NOT MIND IF I MAKE ONE UP OUT OF MY HEAD TO SUIT YOU? --LET ME THINK--

...PERHAPS, BECAUSE HE IS AN IDIOT, THEY ARE ALLOWED TO LOVE --AS SHE HAS NEVER LOVED--

--AND AS HE HAS NEVER LOVED...

...POOR BEFLOODED CREATURE --INNOCENT IN HUMAN-- HE KNOWS NOT WHAT EVE IS IN THIS GIRL'S HEART-- YET--YET PERHAPS THAT IS THE REASON WHY THIS MYSHKEN-IDIOT CUTS THROUGH THE B&L AND INTO THE REMAINING GOODNESS WITHIN THIS GIRL...

...I... CANNOT THINK OF A NEW NAME FOR YOU -- BUT I HAVE AN APPROPRIATE NAME-- DAMON--

--YOU RESEMBLE A DEMON... BUT DAMON IS A MAN'S NAME-- IN THE BIBLE HE WAS A MAN OF POWER--AN OUTCAST LIKE YOU--

...YOU LIKE THE NAME?

--YES-- I KNOW THE STORY OF DAMON AND THE LIONS!--

--YES--





A BAT!

—HE CAN TAKE
THE GUISSE OF A BAT?
HIS POWERS ARE
STRANGE AND
WONDEROUS.

IT IS DRACULA
—GONE OUT FOR
A NIGHT'S
FEASTING—

STRANGE, YES—
BUT NOT WONDEROUS,
DAMON— WONDEROUS
DENOTES SOMETHING GOOD—
AND WHATEVER DRACULA
TOLD YOU ABOUT
VAMPIRISM WAS PROBABLY
INCOMPLETE...

INCOMPLETE?
—HOW SO?

WELL, WHAT
DID HE TELL YOU
VAMPIRISM
WAS?

—HE SAID IT WAS A GOD
—GIVEN-POWER— GIVEN TO HIM
TO THWART EVIL— THAT BY A
RELIGIOUS CEREMONY OF
SUCKING BLOOD FROM THE NECK
OF A VICTIM— SUCH AS YOU LEAH—
INTO A DISCIPLE OF THE LORD, WHO
IN TURN HAS THE POWER TO GO
ABOUT THE WORLD— AND CLEANS
MEN OF EVIL— HE SAID MOST
HUMANS OF THIS WORLD ARE
EVIL AND THAT—

STOP—
STOP—
ENOUGH!!



IT IS NOT GOD-GIVEN
—IT IS SATAN-GIVEN!
GIVEN TO THWART THE
FORCES OF GOOD, NOT EVIL!
THE DRAWING OF BLOOD IS
NOT A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY—
IT'S A SEXUAL CEREMONY! IT
DOES NOT CLEANSSE EVIL
FROM THE VICTIM— BUT TURNS
HIM INTO THE SAME SORT OF
FIEND AS THE VAMPIRE—
AND MOST HUMANS OF
THE WORLD ARE NOT
EVIL—

—MERELY STUPID
AND BELIGERANT...

HE HAS FIED YOU
NOTHING BUT RUBBISH—
I KNOW HE DECEIVED YOU
—HE PROBABLY PLANS TO
ENLIST YOUR SUPPORT
IN THE EVENT OUR NICE-
OUT IS DISCOVERED...

—HE SPOKE
LIES?— NONE
OF HIS WORDS
WERE TRUE?

HE
TWISTED
THE TRUTH
INTO KNOTS,
DAMON—



SO—MY PRINCESS
LEAH— YOU TURN
MY FRIEND AGAINST
ME WITH LOATHSOME
LIES...

DRACULA!

—IT IS
LEAH I
CHOOSE TO
BELIEVE—
NOT YOU!





YOU CAN'T KILL ME
MONSTER-- I CANNOT
DIE-- FOR I AM
ALREADY DEAD.

TAKE YOUR
HANDS OFF
THE GIRL!

WHY? ARE YOU IN LOVE
WITH HER? DON'T BE
STUPID MONSTER...

...SHE LOVES NOT YOU,
SHE LOVES ONLY BLOOD...

--AND AS SHE'S DISCOVERED
ALREADY THAT IS ONE
THING YOU CANNOT GIVE
HER!



YOU'VE GIVEN ME
NO CAUSE TO FIGHT
YOU -- UNTIL THIS
MINUTE...

--YOUR LIES ARE
INCONSEQUENTIAL--
I WILL IGNORE
THEM...

...BUT LEAVE
LEAH BE...

--OR I SWEAR
--I'LL KILL
YOU!



DO YOU LOVE HER? LOOK
AT ME -- LOOK INTO MY EYES
LEAH -- ARE YOU NOT MY
WOMAN? LOOK INTO MY
EYES--

WHAT ARE YOU DOING
TO HER -- IS SHE IN A
TRANCE?

LOOK INTO MY EYES--
LOOK DEEP -- NOW, ANSWER
ME -- WHO DO YOU LOVE?

YOU HAVE PUT
HER INTO SOME
TRANCE -- WHAT SHE
SAYS NOW WILL MEAN
NOTHING TO ME -- SHE
HAS ALREADY SPOKEN
TO ME OF HER LOVE
FOR ME

I LOVE
YOU MASTER
--ONLY YOU!



SUNLIGHT!

THE DAWN
RISES -- WHAT
OF IT?

NOTHING -- NOTHING AT
ALL -- I MUST SLEEP NOW...

LISTEN MY FRIEND, YOU WANT
THE GIRL, I CARE NOT ABOUT OUR
ARGUMENT -- TAKE HER AND
GO..

--GO!





The HORROR-MOOD is rather proud of the SHOGGOOTH series. Many writers have adapted H. P. Lovecraft's writings into the illustrated story medium but as far as we know, no writer has "extended" the famous Lovecraft SHOGGOOTH theme into new illustrations like this. As many writers are doing in best novels and novels, such as Lin Carter and the late August Derleth — no one, that is, except in the HORROR - MOOD magazines where we try to make illustration a part of the publication of THE MORGAN AND THE NIGHTMARE #22 last month, we are plunging into our INTERNATIONAL HORROR - MOOD SHOGGOOTH CRUSADE, an organization dedicated to ending the Shoggoth Menace — you can (ask) this club and get a free certificate! You grade no money, only your life.

We are giving over our usual letter/editorial space this issue of the 1976 PSYCHO SUMMER-SPECIAL to a letter from MRS. LEONARD LYNNE DOCKY of Hawthorn, Illinois, and to background information on both the SHOGGOOTH CRUSADE and our SHOGGOOTH series.

Dear Al Hewston, editor —

A short while ago I found a copy of your magazine, NIGHTMARE #18, on the magazine rack. I had never seen it — or any of your other magazines — before. They do not carry them at home, but they do in a drugstore not far from campus. So, being a connoisseur of things macabre and grotesque, I went through it to see what it had to offer. One article took me back — "The Yawl", volume five of the "Shoggoth Chronicles." Amazing!

And the Master, the "young man from Providence" was even mentioned in the headline, along with his brain-child, the red Arab, and that most abominable of aquatic volumes, THE NECRONOMICRON! I purchased the magazine, of course, to peruse at my leisure.

It was, indeed, quite a find for me. I fancy myself quite a fan and scholar of H. P. Lovecraft, and have been since I first picked up THE DUNWICH HORROR AND OTHERS in my freshman year in high school. Since then I have given a number of lectures on Lovecraft and the Cthulhu mythos (mostly to high school students, one at a junior college) and have taught a week-long unit on his works, using "The Dunwich Horror" and "The Cthulhu Mythos" as the text. In cooperation with a Suspension in Literature English class.

This is, however, not a long but a praise. Because, although I have an extensive collection of Lovecraft's I have not collected an interesting lack of some in the

big, black and white horror magazines. Marvel adapted some of the works in their comic magazines, and one story in one of the Warren publications used linear and Cthulhu, but in the whole the rich field has been vastly ignored. I salute you.

However (there is always one of them, isn't there?) one thing bothered me, Shoggoths, as expressed in Lovecraft's works, vary greatly from those of your publication. "The Mountains of Madness" is, I think, the main mention of them, as one part of your story hinted. Turning to that novel, (Arkham house edition, 1954) we find the following descriptions of Shoggoths:

"... multifaceted protoplasmic masses capable of molding their forms into all sort of temporary organic and inorganic substance . . ." (p. 58) " . . . viscous masses . . ." (same page) " . . . laid mountain of slime-spewing protoplasm . . ." (p. 62) and finally " . . . formless protoplasm able to mock and distortions of looking only . . . rubbery black-and-spheroidal infinitely plastic and ductile . . . areas of suggestion . . ." (p. 63)

Now, it is clear that these descriptions of the Old One are quite different from those Shoggoths of your publication. Still, many points were greeting

to a fan of E. H. P. I, as he has been called. The mention of the NECRONOMICRON, for one thing. Though I think about everything has been mentioned as being in that issue (Arkham wasn't killed by the Great Old One, he died of exhaustion trying to write the thing). The Shoggoths are given special mention in that, but Arkham does not refer to them except as the dreams of people who had chewed certain alkaline herbs. Also the city (though I looked less like Cyprian Coast and more like Mexican Aztec) was great, the mention of the Mountains of Madness, and of course the TENGLE!



The R. H. Gardner, Jr., who suggests
"in your Shoggoth" to this artist
"in the style of his other work"
October 1975



Lovecraft's illustration of CTHULHU inspired Zeev's interpretation of the SHOGGOOTH.

Therefore, on balance my enjoyment was great, and my argument sparked more by that strange, nit-picking instinct of teachers and librarians (though I am neither, I hope to be the former.) I can appreciate your sensitivity, also; if weird, indeed, be difficult to illustrate an entire series featuring what Fritz Leiber said was "... incandescent, blinding shining columns of what looked like far amorphous with fragments of broken, multicolored glass ..." (THE BURROWERS BENEATH, p. 118). Prose of occasionalisms alone cannot do the thing have a shape.

And the shape taken was not a bad one. May I be presumptuous enough — I found it strangely reminiscent of another figure in HP, the ghoul. I refer especially to the amorphous ghoul — truly — poem of Richard Upton Hickman, in the story "PICKMAN'S MODEL" (THE DUNWICH HORROR AND OTHER ARTHUR HICKMAN, 1963) they are described as:

"... roughly bloodstained, had a forward slumping, and a vaguely canine snarl ..." (p. 25) "... squalling as the chest of sleepers ..." and "... Dying about a hanged which ..." (p. 25) "... FACES that leered and stared ..." (same page)

IN THE DREAM QUEST OF UNKNOWN KAGATHA Hickman becomes a Ghoul himself, and the scenes of the Shoggoths rippling among the topographers was very reminiscent of a similar scene in KAGATHA. Of course, there is no suggestion of any eating, just burying, in your story; and, too, Shoggoth sounds better than Ghoul, having the advantage of more mobility and a lack of human associations, and connections with those meaty limbs.

Your presentation is good, and even Lovecraftian—the best

female presentation as far, etc. (Unless, I really IS ...) The idea of using the editor and artist even better, an interesting twist on the curious and being little known who usually introduce stories in other magazines, but this time that people, part of the story. (Impertinent aside: if you two really look like that, you are two dudes I would not mind meeting!)

Reproductions used in this booklet are courtesy of ARCHAIK HOUSE PUBLISHING, and are printed here for purposes of a literary review of H. P. Lovecraft ...

THE HORROR-MOOD. —International shoggoth crusade—

It is to certify that

is a full degree member of the ART-SHOGGOOTH CRUSADE, who designs and composes and contributes to this a situation of the shoggoth-mood, by personal efforts, and by joining, when and where, an expedition into the Center of the Night where shoggoths dwell; is of the same also competent, knows, handles, and other necessary, including some, taking and the in this matter to all human causes in the service of an expedient



signature of member offering piece of participation

BY DESIGNER
Signature of Shoggoth Crusade

ARTIST OF HORROR
Signature of Shoggoth Crusade

BY WRITER
Signature of Shoggoth Crusade

Thank you very much for your indulgence in this overly-long letter. I am sure that both you and the artist are aware of all of this. Call it perhaps, the atmosphere of an enthusiastic HP fan when she "meets" another.

I remain,
yours very truly,
Ms. Bernadette Lynn Brady

Ms. Brady's letter was received with great enthusiasm, for indeed it is a pleasure to receive correspondence from one so clearly fanatical about the weird works of Lovecraft as we are ...

The complete SHOGGOOTH series is printed hereafter for

everyone's HORROR - MOOD checklist ...

In her letter, Bernadette expresses interest in our localization of the SHOGGOOTH's appearance. She is quite right in suggesting "... Practical considerations alone demand that the thing have a shape ..." but when we planned the shape we wanted to be as close to a Lovecraft concept as possible, so artist Zane joined the project upon a sketch by Lovecraft himself at CTUHLU, reproduced here which we dug up when we visited the LOVECRAFT COLLECTION at the BROWN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, built on the very grounds 196 College Street where Lovecraft was born, at Providence, Rhode Island ...

... Everyone is invited to join the CRUSADE, free of any charge, however this is certainly the last opportunity you will have to join — we will not accept any requests for membership diplomats after October 15, 1974. To join, send for for necessary postage and handling to: HORROR - MOOD SHOGGOOTH CRUSADE, Glywast Publishing Corporation 16 East 44th Street, Room 1501, New York City, N.Y. 10017. Your certificate will be personally, individually, autographed by Archibald Al Emotionally-Disturbed Ed. and Acknowledged Argentine ...

... THE SHOGGOOTH OMNISCIENTS, and THE SHOGGOOTH CRUSADE, are just 2 good reasons to stay tuned in to PSYCHO, NIGHTMARE, and SCREAM ...

R.U.P.

ARCHAIK AL

DUDES WORTH MEETING

artist ZANE

artist CARDOMA

writer HEWITSON



THE SKULL FOREST OF OLD EARTH: illustrated by Zane-NIGHTMARE #1
WHERE ARE THE INHABITANTS OF EARTH: illustrated by Zane-NIGHTMARE #11
THE GROTTOESQUE GREEN EARTH: illustrated by Zane-NIGHTMARE #12
THE ARCHAIC BURIAL GROUND: illustrated by GUAL-SCREAM #1
THE VAULT: illustrated by CARDOMA-NIGHTMARE #16
THE SCREAM AND THE NIGHTMARE: illustrated by CARDOMA-NIGHTMARE #22
— coming up in the SHOGGOOTH series, yet to be published, by artist Zane!
— THE MOUNTAIN OF GRAVES AND UNDER THE GROUND IS HELL —
These stories were all written for the HORROR-MOOD by Alan Weinstein



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THIS IS THE PLANET **SADU**...IT IS A HARSH WORLD...FRAUGHT WITH SAVAGERY...BLOOD...AND DEATH!

REVOLUTION!

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY TOM ST. ETIENNE AND DAN ADKINS

SIRE—SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT CONTENT WITH YOUR RULE! THEY SPEAK OF REVOLUTION!

MY MEN HAVE MANAGED TO EXECUTE MOST OF THE CONSPIRATORS... BUT THE SITUATION REMAINS TENSE—EXTREMELY TENSE!

MORRO, YOU INSUPERABLE INCOMPETENT—DON'T BOTHER ME WITH TRIFLES!

GET THEIR ATTENTION ON SOMETHING ELSE! DISTRACT THE PEOPLE WITH MORE GAMES!

I DON'T CARE IF YOU MUST PILLAGE AND PLUNDER HALF THE PLANETS IN THE GALAXY!

I WANT MORE SLAVES FOR THE GAMES!

MORE SLAVES DO YOU HEAR ME? MORE SLAVES!

AS YOU WISH SUPREME ONE!

THESE GAMES PROVIDE SUCH EXQUISITE SPORT! A SHAME WE'VE JUST WITNESSED THE LAST EVENT OF THE DAY...

BUT NO MATTER! GENERAL MORRO... SUMMON THE REST OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD!

YES, EXCELLENCY—AS YOU COMMAND!

I WISH TO RETURN TO THE PALACE—BEFORE I AM OVERCOME BY THE WEAR AND NOISOME STENCH OF THE ARSINA!

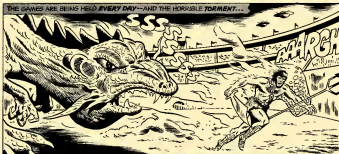
PLANET AFTER PLANET FALLS BEFORE GENERAL MORRO'S INDOMITABLE MIGHT...

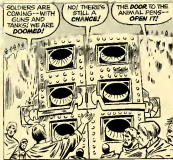
RETREAT! RETREAT! THE INVADERS ARE EVERYWHERE!

GET UP THE RAMPY MOVE, YOU SPINELESS DOGS—OR FEEL THE SHARP BITE OF MY NEURONIC WHIP!

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE HERE—NOT WITH OTHER WORLDS RIPS FOR SLAUGHTER—WAITING TO BE CONQUERED!

TEAR FROM!











TONIGHT—AARON PARISEE
WOULD NOT DREAM HIS CURSE
OF THE IS MINED! HE WOULD
NOT STAND AT THE MOUTH OF A
HELL, PEOPLED WITH VILE,
RANCID, LOATHSOME THINGS
SPAWNED IN THE DARK RILLS
OF A TORMENTED MEMORY!!

NO... NOT TONIGHT...
FOR THIS DAY HE SAID
KEPT...

THE VOW!

BUT, EVEN IN THE MOMENT OF
TRIUMPH, AARON'S TORTURED
BODY TREMBLED FROM
FAMILIAR, CHILLING SPASM THAT
SEEMED TO ERUPT FROM THE
ICY PULP OF HIS OWN MARROW
—AND HIS THOUGHTS RACED
BACK TO THAT DAY SO LONG AGO
WHEN HIS WIFE LAY DYING... A
VICTIM OF THE PLAGUE....

OH, MY DEAR ADALAYNE...
DO NOT FRET FOR THE CHILD...
SHE WILL PREVAIL... AND I
WILL GIVE HER EVERYTHING
HER HEART SHOULD DESIRE!
THIS MY VOW TO YOU.

GIVE... YOUR WIFE
IS DEAD, AND I
MUST LEAVE...
THERE ARE MANY
TO ATTEND...

YES... MANY TO ATTEND...
FOR THE HOMES, THE
STREETS—PERHAPS THE
WHOLE WORLD WAS BEING
SWAMPED BY THE STREET
STENCH OF DEATH!

AND THERE WAS ALSO
THE LIVING DEAD WHO
DEFILED THE NIGHTS WITH
THEIR PUTRID BODIES, THEIR
ANGRY OATHS, THEIR
VENGEFUL FIRES!

BURN

BURN



ONLY THE CERTAIN
HAND OF FATE LED
AARON AND HIS
DAUGHTER TO A
PLACE OF SAFETY!

DEATH TO THE
ARISTOCRATIC
DEVILS... BURN
THE DOGS!

THE FILTH... THEY'RE
BURNING OUR HOME!



FURTHER GOOD FORTUNE DIRECTED
AARON TO THE DOOR OF HIS OLD
FRIEND-THE PREFECT OF POLICE....

HELP YOU? MY
GOD, MAN... I
CAN'T EVEN
HELP MYSELF!

THE INSURGENTS
...THE DISEASE...
WE WILL ALL DIE!



WAIT!... THERE IS
ONE THING... I NEED
A MAN TO OVERSEE
DISPOSAL OF THE
CORPSES! WE MUST
AT LEAST PRETEND
AT CIVILIZATION!

YES... I WILL
DO IT! AND-
THERE IS A
HOUSE AT THE
CREMATORIUM
... WE CAN
STAY THERE!

AND SO IT BEGAN
... THAT GRISLY TASK!
BUT AARON AND
HIS DAUGHTER WERE
SAFE IN THEIR
FORTRESS OF DESPAIR!



AND THERE WERE
EVEN REWARDS
MANY OF THE
CADAVERS CARRIED
VALUABLES!

THE DEVIL WILL NOT GET
EVERYTHING... NO... WE
SHALL BE PAID FOR THIS
LEPEROUS WORK... WE
SHARE ALIKE!

OTHER THAN
OURSELVES...
THERE ARE FEW
WITH COURAGE
TO TOUCH THE
DEAD... EVEN
TO TAKE THEIR
TREASURE!

THROUGH THE NIGHTS
OF TERROR, AARON
PARIGEE'S LEGION
ROAMED WITH
IMMUNITY TO DISEASE
AND REVOLUTION...
COLLECTING THE HUMAN
REFUSE THAT LITTERED
"THE STREETS AND
DOORWAYS..."

AND FROM THE
CREMATORIUM
BELOW, CONSTANT
CLOUDS OF ACRID
SMOKE...




AARON SET ABOUT HIS WORK WITH A FURY THAT MADE HIM
OBLIVIOUS TO HIS SURROUNDINGS - EVEN TO THE WIDE LITTLE
EYES - TRANSFIXED ON THE MORIBUND ACTIVITY...



HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER
CASSANDRA WAS AARON'S
ONLY JOY, AND HER
WARMTH SEEMED TO
SOFTEN THE DEEP
TRENCHES OF STRAIN
THAT GLASHED HIS
FACE...





IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED
..THERE WAS NEVER A SHORTAGE
OF CLIENTS..THE PLAGUE WAS
REPLACED BY THE GUILLOTINE!
A JADED AARON PARIGEE NO
LONGER RETCHED AT THE ODOR
OF HIS NEOROPOLIS! THE LOOK
OF THE DEAD WAS SO COMMON-
PLACE THAT HE CEASED TO
SEE IT...

HOWEVER, THE HORRORS OF HIS WORLD
WERE NONE-THE-LESS REAL, AND A
SINGLE EXPERIENCE SERVED TO JOLT
HIS AWARENESS...

CASSANDRA!
CASSANDRA,
WHERE ARE
YOU GIRL?

I'M UP
HERE
FATHER!

..AND WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
IN THE ATTIC?

..I'M
VISITING
WITH MY
FRIEND!

FRIEND? YOU
HAVE NO...

..FRIEND!

THIS IS
MUM!

NAUSEA AND GUILT STABBED AT AARON'S SOUL AS HE RETREATED FROM THE REPULSIVE SCENE...

I'VE FAILED MY DAUGHTER IN A MOST HORRIBLE WAY... I VOWED TO BRING HER HAPPINESS... BUT... BUT... I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT UP TO HER!



IN DESPERATION, AARON SHOWERED CASSANDRA WITH GIFTS, BUT LIKE MOST FATHERS, HE FAILED TO NOTICE THAT SHE COULD NO LONGER BE INTERESTED IN CHILDISH TRIFLES, FOR RECENTLY THERE WAS A DIFFERENT LIGHT IN HER EYES...

LISTEN...A MUSIC BOX!

YES... THANK YOU!



THEN... ONE NIGHT, QUITE BY ACCIDENT...HE GLIMPSED A FAMILIAR FIGURE AS IT SWIFT ACROSS THE COURTYARD!

CASSANDRA... WHERE...



AND SO AARON RECEIVED STILL ANOTHER SURPRISE... HIS BRAIN EXPLODED, HIS SENSES REELED...



... BUT NOW HE COULD ACT IN A MOST POSITIVE WAY AGAINST THIS NEW MENACE TO HIS DAUGHTER!

ENOUGH...YOU MINCING DANDY...



IF YOU TOUCH MY CHILD AGAIN...I'LL FEED YOU TO MY FIRES! I KNOW YOUR FACE... I KNOW WHERE TO FIND YOU!



CASSANDRA LAPPED INTO DEEP DESPAIR...AND IN GRIEF SHE BEGAN TO WASTE AWAY...



I'M SORRY, AARON... SHE'S LOST HER WILL TO LIVE! PERHAPS IT'S THIS DISMAL PLACE...

NO.... PHYSICIAN! IT IS SOMETHING I HAVE DONE!

CASSANDRA... YOU MUST UNDERSTAND... THAT MAN CANNOT BE A 'RIGHT LOVE' FOR YOU! I KNOW HIM TO BE ANDRE BRIGANCE... AND HE IS A RUMORED PARAMOUR OF THE EMPRESS... AND IF THE EMPEROR KNEW OF THAT SHABBY LITTLE AFFAIR... HE'D...



I AM HIS TRUE LOVE! I WANT HIM WITH ME! IF IT CANNOT BE... THEN I SHALL DIE!



NO... PLEASE! I WILL DO SOMETHING!

THOSE IN AUTHORITY SAID THE NOTE OF INDICTMENT THREW THE EMPEROR INTO A FROTHING RAGE...

..AND ALTHOUGH BRIGANCE MAY HAVE BEEN A GREAT LOVER... HE WAS A PITIFULLY POOR LIAR...

BUT IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT AN UNSIGNED LETTER APPEARED IN THE EMPEROR'S QUARTERS...



NO.. NO I HAVE NOT KNOWN THE EMPRESS... NO!

NOW... WE COME TO THIS NIGHT AND AARON PARIGEE'S COMFORT IN HAVING BROUGHT JOY TO HIS DAUGHTER'S ACHING HEART...



THE COMPETENT UNION OF A SCARLET LETTER, CUPID, AND LA BELLE GUILLOTINE HAD DELIVERED THE GROOM...AND EVEN NOW A LOVING CASSANDRA IS BUSY...



SEWING HIS HEAD BACK ON.

END

IT RAINS OUTSIDE THE WINCHESTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL... RAINS IN A THREATENING DOWNPOUR THAT THREATENS TO DROWN THE SMALL SEA-PORT VILLAGE OFF THE COAST OF CAPE COD -- FRANK GOETH'S CARES NOT ABOUT THIS RAIN... HE HAS OTHER, MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONCERN HIMSELF WITH AT THE MOMENT... LIKE A PREGNANT WIFE ABOUT TO GIVE BIRTH AT ANY SECOND...

...AND SO STARTS OUR TALE ...

... WITH A PREMATURE LOOK AT THE BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE NEXT DAY'S LOCAL NEWSPAPER... WHICH READS:

— from THE WINCHESTER DAILY CITIZEN

GOETHE — Frank and Vanessa are pleased to announce the Vincent and William and of their daughter, Natalie, Annals, at the Winchester Memorial Hospital, All well, and are best love.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

WRITTEN BY ALAN WILKINSON

ILLUSTRATED BY RAMON TORRENTE



DOCTOR DOCTOR... IT'S TIME!

QUICKLY THEN... THE OPERATION ROOM IS CLEARED AND WAITING FOR YOUR WIFE!



HAVE ALL THE PREPARATIONS BEEN MADE?

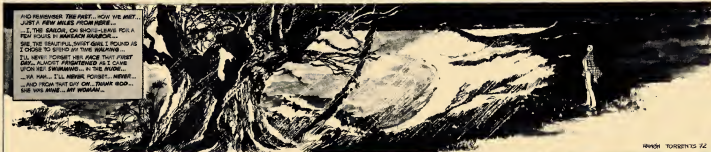
CERTAINLY... THIS IS AS IMPORTANT A BIRTH TO ME AS IT IS TO YOU!

I WOULDN'T DREAM OF DENYING ANY CHANCES... OF COURSE EVERYTHING IS READY!



FRANK--YOU'VE ALREADY DONE ALL YOU CAN... SO OVER TO THE VALLEY PUB AND HAVE A DRINK...

...I'LL SEND SOMEONE OVER WHEN YOUR WIFE DELIVERS...



WIND TORRENTS 72



THANK YOU
DOCTOR... WE
APPRECIATE ALL
YOU'VE DONE...

...NOT AT ALL MY BOY... IT'S BEEN MY PLEASURE -- MY DISTINCT
HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO HAVE MADE THIS DELIVERY...

...I HOPE ALL GOES WELL AT HOME -- IF
THERE IS ANYTHING FURTHER I CAN DO
I'LL BE GLAD TOO HAPPY... AND REST
ASSURED THAT THE HOSPITAL
STAFF WON'T TELL A SOLE...

HOW DO YOU
FEEL VANESSA?

JUST FINE
DOCTOR...
...FINE AND
PROUD!

DAVID L. RAYMOND

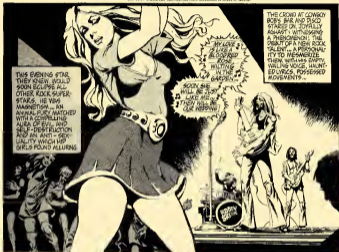
NOW COMES THE DAWN... THE RAIN THAT HAS FALLEN DURING THE NIGHT
LEAVES PUDDLES ABOUT THE GROUND AS FRANK CARRIES HIS WIFE-
WOMAN TO THE CAR -- IT HAS BEEN A LONG NIGHT...

...IT WILL BE A FEW DAYS NOW BEFORE THE EGGS HATCH AND HIS
CHILDREN KNOW AIR AND LIGHT... BUT IT WILL BE DAYS FILLED WITH
HAPPINESS FOR FRANK AND VANESSA BOTH... DAYS SHARED AND
REMEMBERED... FOR THERE WILL BE A NEXT TIME TOO...



PHANTOM OF THE ROCK ERA

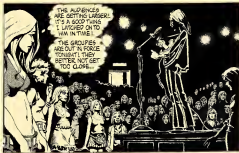
BY BRIAN CHARLES MINKAL/STYLING: KATHY HENRY/ARTIST: JEFFREY

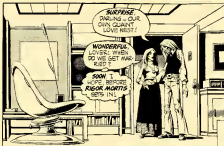




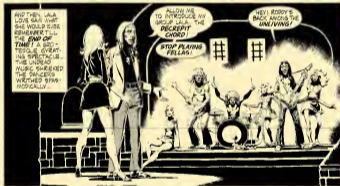
THE DRESSING ROOM WAS CRAMPED AND MUSTY, WITH A SHRUG OF SELF-PITY THE EXOTIC FIGURE TURNED TO HER...















HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT
THE MIDNIGHT SLASHER?

HE'S TALL, HE'S GAUNT AND
RECKLESS. HE'S CRAFTY,
CRUEL, AND SENSELESS...



WHA--?!
THE
SLASHER!
NO! NO!
AAAGHH!

THE MIDNIGHT SLASHER

HAVE YOU NEVER
HEARD ABOUT THE MIDNIGHT
SLASHER? HE'S THE ONE
WHO LURKS ON THE
THRESHOLD OF FEAR!

THE SLASHER'S
WORK, INSPECTOR
RICHARDS! AND IT
HAPPENED AT
MIDNIGHT! JUST
LIKE THE OTHERS!

HE SEEMS
TO SELECT
HIS VICTIMS AT
RANDOM!

HE
SETTLES
FOR WHOEVER'S
AROUND AT
MIDNIGHT!

"DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MIDNIGHT SLASHER?
HE'S THE ONE ON EVERYONE'S TONGUE..."

IT'S JUST
BLOODY HORRIBLE,
MISS WATTS! THE
SLASHER DID IN
ANOTHER ONE LAST
NIGHT, AND WHAT
ARE THE POLICE
DOIN' ABOUT 'IM?
NOTHIN' THEY
AIN'T!

YOU WORRY
TOO MUCH, MISSUS
SHRIMPTON! THE POLICE
WILL CATCH HIM
SOON ENOUGH!

THE POLICE!
HAHA! THEY NEVER
CAUGHT SLY JACK,
DID THEY? THE
RIPPER MADE FOOLS
OF THEM... JUST
LIKE THE SLASHER'S
DOIN'!

PLEASE,
I'VE NO
TIME FOR
MYSTICAL
TALK.
LEAVE ME
ALONE!

HAVE YOU EVER SENSED
THE MIDNIGHT SLASHER?
HE'S THE ONE WHO CREEPS
OUTSIDE YOUR WALLS...

HE'LL SMASH
YOUR WINDOW...
SMOTHER YOUR DREAMS...

BRA
KASH
CHINKLE

DONG DONG

NO, GOD,
N-NO... THE
S-SLASHER!
NO, NO...

AAA/VIEEE!

DONG DONG DONG

DONG DONG



SO YOU LEFT
JUST BEFORE
MIDNIGHT, AND
HEARD MISS
WATTS
SCREAMING...?

I RAN
BACK TO
SEE WHAT IT
WAS ALL ABOUT!
POOR MISS WATTS!
WHAT ARE YOU
POLICE GOING TO
DO ABOUT IT?



FIRST OF ALL,
WE'RE GOING TO
BE COGNIZANT OF
ALL THE FACTS. LEST
WE UNDERTAKE
SPECIOUS INTERPOLA-
TIONS STEEPED IN
SOPHISTRY OR
INSIGNIFICANT
ABSDURTY!



AH, FANCY
WORDS WON'T
BRING YE ANY
CLOSER TO THE
SLASHER!



NEVERTHELESS,
I THINK IT
ADVANTAGIOUS TO
PURSUE MY LINE OF
INTERROGATION, NOW,
THE SLASHER
ENTERED THE
BEDROOM THROUGH
THE WINDOW...

HOW DID
YOU KNOW HE
CAME THROUGH
THE WINDOW?
YOU HAVEN'T
BEEN TO THE
SCENE OF THE
MURDER...



WELL, ERR
I'VE STUDIED
THE REPORTS
MY MEN HAVE
DELIVERED!



REPORTS!
HAH! IF YOU
DON'T DO SOME-
THING ABOUT
THE SLASHER, I
WILL! GOOD DAY,
INSPECTOR!

DID YOU
HEAR ABOUT
THE MIDNIGHT
SLASHER?
HE'S THE ONE
WHO'LL LEAVE
HIS FOOTPRINTS
ON YOUR SOUL.



DONG
DONG
DONG

THE
BELLS!

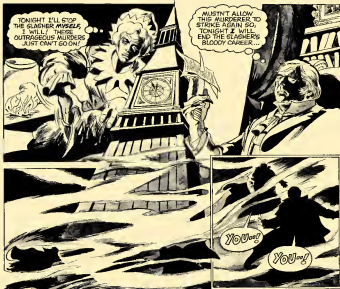
MIDNIGHT- WHEN
MY FATHER DIED HERE,
UNDER THE WHEELS OF
A CARRIAGE, UNDER THE
SOUND OF THE
MADDERING BELLS-!

HE'S THE ONE POSSESSED OF INEFFABLE
SUFFERING AND RECIPROCAL BLOOD-LUST.



HE'S THE ONE WHO DARTS
FROM THE NIGHT IN A
SWIRL OF GLEAMING
CONFUSION...







IT'S SO DARK...

AND NEARLY MIDNIGHT...



WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY TH-THAT...?

THE BELLS... BEGINNING TO PEAL...



HAVE YOU EVER MET THE MIDNIGHT SLASHER? HE'S THE ONE YOU'D LEAST EXPECT...

...AND THE SLASHER MUST STRIKE!

Y-YOU'RE THE SLASHER--? GOOD LORD, NO!

DONG

DONG

DONG



THE BELLS-- THE BELLS THAT KILLED DADDY! MUST STOP THE BELLS!



DONG
DONG

I'LL MAKE YOU STOP RINGING THOSE BELLS.



DONG

DONG



HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE MIDNIGHT SLASHER? SHE'S THE ONE WHO FINALLY ACHIEVED RETRIBUTION ON THE BELLS--AND RECEIVED THE SAME IN KIND...



DONG!!

THE END

Within the TORTURE CHAMBER!

... AND BY ORDER OF THE INQUISITOR GENERAL, I... JUDGE HERNANDEZ FUERTE... ALLOW THE EXECUTION OF HERETIC ELENA CALCIN TO COMMENCE!

FURIOUSLY, DESPERATELY THE GIRL PULLS AT HER BONDS, HER MOIST, BULGING EYES HYPNOTIZED BY THE DULL PLATE OF SHARP IRON SPIKES MOVING HUNGRILY CLOSER! SOUNDLESS SCREAMS SHATTER UNHAPPY ABOUT THE GRIMY STONE WALLS OF THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS! SHE HEARS THE SEEMINGLY DETACHED DRONE OF THE JUDGE WHO PRO-NOUNCES SENTENCE UPON HER, AND THE WORDS MEAN NOTHING! FOR THIS IS SPAIN OF THE 16TH CENTURY! THIS IS THE AGE OF THE INQUISITION!

SHE DIES!
SHE DIES!
HEE-HEEE!

HAVE YOU NOT NOTICED? HER TONGUE WAS REMOVED SOME DAYS AGO BY OUR SURGEONS! THE DEVIL KNOWS WHY! AND DON'T BE MORBID, JUDGE GARCIA! WE ARE OFFICERS OF THE LAW! WE ARE NOT HERE TO LEER AT THE PAIN OF OTHERS!

ANN... THE INVENTIVENESS OF OUR LEADERS NEVER CEASES TO AMUSE ME, JUDGE FUERTE! BUT THE FLAVOR OF THIS TORTURE IS SOMEHOW SPOILED! OUR LOVELY VICTIM OPENS HER MOUTH, YET NO SCREAMS ISSUE FORTH!

DIABLO!

JUDGE FUERTE IS REPELLED BY THE GLEEFUL, INSANE LAUGHTER OF GARCIA AND THE DROOLING LIPS OF THE EXECUTIONER. HE SHAUTS HIS EYES! ATTEMPTS CONCENTRATION ON HIS LOYALTY TO HIS NATIVE COUNTRY! BUT THE LAUGHTER DROWNS THIS OUT, AND FUERTE KNOWS HE IS A PUPPET OF THE INQUISITION, HIS LOYALTY AND DEDICATION MISUSED!

WE HAVE ADDED ANOTHER CORPSE TO THE FILE OF HUNDREDS! AND SO MY DUTY IS DONE FOR THIS NIGHT!

OF COURSE, MY FRIEND! SURELY YOU ARE NOT OFFENDED BY A LITTLE HEALTHY BLOOD AND GORE! HAA! HAA!

HEE! HEE!

I'LL LEAVE HER BODY TO ROT TILL THE MORROW! PERHAPS THE NIGHT RATE MAY HAVE A FEAST!

FUERTE MIGHT BECOME AN IMPORTANT MAN IN THE GOVERNMENT BUILDING ABOVE THESE CHAMBERS IF NOT FOR HIS WEAK STOMACH!

YOU MAY LEAVE THE ENTRANCE TO THIS DUNGEON UNGUARDED AGAIN, EXECUTIONER!

FOR WHO WOULD DARE TO INTRUDE HERE?

FOR HOURS BEYOND THE INQUISITION'S DEPARTURE, KEEIE, WHISPERING TORCH LIGHT ILLUMINATES ONLY COLD, SOMBER STONE WALLS OF CRACKED AND CHIPPING MASONRY, OCCASIONALLY LIGHTING PATCHES OF FUR AS OVERSIZED RATS SCAMPER ALMOST NOISELESSLY IN DARK, SPECTRAL CORNERS! OUTSIDE, IN A WORLD ONLY QUESTIONABLY SAME, NIGHTFALL CONQUERS AND CURTAINS THE SKY! WITHIN, A YOUNG HANGLED BODY LIES CARELESSLY IN AN INSTRUMENT WHICH IS THE PRODUCT OF DISEASED MINDS!



THEN...

CRREAKKKK

CAUTIOUSLY, FEAR-MUNCHER, MOVES THE YOUNG NOBLE-MAN DOWN THE MUSTY, FILTH-COVERED STEPS TO THE INQUISITORY CHAMBER!

ELENA! I KNOW YOU CANNOT HEAR ME, YET I MUST SPEAK ONE MORE TIME WITH YOU!

GUINOT SHAKES THE LOW VOICE OF DON ALEXANDRE GUSANTE, ONE BORN OF NOBLE BLOOD!

PERHAPS MY HEART WILL CALM IF I CONFESS! IF MERELY TO YOUR UNMOVING CORPSE! DO YOU REMEMBER MY OFFER OF MARRIAGE, ELENA? AND HOW YOU REJECTED ME?

FOR MONTHS AFTER, I FOUND I STILL LONGED FOR YOU! CRAVED YOUR UNTOUCHABLE BEAUTY. FINALLY, THE LONGING TRANSFORMED TO... CONTEMPT--HATRED.

USING MY FAMILY'S WEALTH, I BRIBED SEVERAL "WITNESSES" WHO TESTIFIED IN COURT TO SEEING YOU PERFORM THE SECRET RITES OF SATAN! I KNEW EVEN THE SUSPICION OF SUCH HERESY WAS PUNISHABLE BY THE MONARCH'S SPECIAL BRAND OF DEATH!

YOU NEVER SUSPECTED THAT I WAS BEHIND YOUR FLIGHT! YET, IN CASE YOU HAD, I PAID WELL SO THAT YOUR TONGUE WOULD BE STILLED! AND CUT OUT!

I REGRET MY HEEDLESS ACTS, ELENA! I AM TRULY SORRY YOU SUFFERED SUCH HORROR! I HAVE MADE MY WAY INTO THIS GROTESQUE, VILE-SMELLING TOMB TO TELL YOUR SPIRIT THIS!

PERHAPS I MAY SLEEP NOW WITHOUT THE NIGHTMARES OF CONSCIENCE WHICH PLAGUE ME THESE SUFFERING NIGHTS!

**FOR
DIO!
WHO
ARE
YOU?**

**I AM JUDGE FUERTE! HE WHO PRONOUNCED
THE SENTENCE OF DEATH UPON THAT POOR
GIRL! I RETURNED TO REMOVE HER MUTILATED
BODY FROM THAT MONSTROSITY! ONLY TO
HEAR A CONFESSION MOTIVATED BY SLUMBER-
LESS NIGHTS! NOT FROM ANY DECENCY OF
CHARACTER! YOU HYPOCRITE! YOU
HUMAN SLIME!**

**IN ADDITION TO THE DAILY SHAME I FEEL
BENEATH THE UNHOLY FOOT OF THE INQUI-
TION, NOW I AM AN ACCESSORY TO
MURDER! MY HANDS ARE STAINED WITH
INNOCENT BLOOD!**

**ENOUGH! I FIND YOU GUILTY!
AND SHALL CARRY OUT YOUR
SENTENCE MYSELF!**

**STAY BACK!
YOU FOOL! I
HAVE STUDIED
FENCING FROM
THE MASTERS!**

**WOLFE,
UNLEASHED
EMOTIONS
ERUPT INTO
FURIOUS
SWORDPLAY
IN THE
GREAT
CHAMBER!
THE CLASH
AND
RINGING OF
STEEL
UPON STEEL
RAISES A
STEADY,
FEVERISH
DIN!
FRIGHTENED
DUNGEON
MITS
WHIMPER
AND HURRY
FOR
SHELTER!**

**MURDERING CONWARD...
EEE-YAAAAH!!**

**FOR DIO!
WHAT HAS MY
FOOLISH HAND
DONE? THE
PENALTY FOR
KILLING IN
INQUISITION JUDGE
IS... DEATH BY
TORTURE! N-NO!
NO! I MUST
GET OUT OF
HERE!**



**I MUST
GET OUT!**

A LAST FAINT CLANGOR OF SWORDS
ECHOES AND FADES, REPLACED BY THE
SHARP STACCATO OF RUNNING FEET!
DON ALEXANDRE GUISANTE SCRAMBLES
PANIC-STRIKEN UP THE STAIRCASE---
AND ABRUPTLY PARALYZES!

SLOWLY, ALMOST REVERENTLY, THE TREMBLING
NOBLEMAN CREEPS BACK INTO THE GHOSTLY
INTERIOR OF THE UNCLEAN CHAMBER!

THE SWORD! I LEFT IT
BEHIND! CAN'T LET IT BE
FOUND! MY FAMILY CREST
IS INSCRIBED UPON IT!

YES! I MUST RETRIEVE MY SWORD!
MY... MY SWORD! I... I LEFT
IT--

-- IN THE
JUDGE'S
BODY!

I... I'LL RETRIEVE IT QUICKLY, THEN
LEAVE THIS LAIR OF THE DAMNED
FOR ALL TIME! UGGH! IT IS IN
DEEP! THIS LIGHT TRICKS MY
VISION! I COULD SWEAR THE
JUDGE'S EYES STARE AT ME!

THEY DO!
Noooo!!!

ONLY THE SUDDEN
FLASH OF REASON
PREVENTS THE NOBLE-
MAN FROM FLEEING!
THAT, AND HIS STILL
IMPALING SWORD!

MUST KEEP HOLD OF MY
SENSES! EL ESTA MUERTO...
HE IS DEAD! FUERTE CAN NOT
HARM ME! I ONLY IMAGINE
HIS ACCUSING STARE! HIS
EYES ARE LIFELESS! LIFELESS!

I'VE GOT TO PULL
HARDER! THE SWORD
HAS TO COME FREE!
DEAR GOD--IT
HAS TO!!

HIS STOMACH REVOLTED BY THE OBSCENE
RITUAL, GUSANTE CLENCHES HIS TEETH TO
KEEP FROM VOMITING! HE TUGS WITH UNCHECKED
FORCE! THEN, HE HEARS A SHORT, SICKENING
SOUND AND THE BLADE SLIDES FREE!

TH-- THE---
BLOOD! I
CAN'T BEAR
THE SIGHT OF--
AAAGGH!

A MOMENT! I NEED ONLY A
MOMENT TO CALM DOWN! QUELL
MY POUNDING HEART! LET MY
BREATHING RETURN TO NORMAL!
AND STRIKE THAT GROSSLY SIGHT
FROM MY BRAIN!

THEN I'LL FETCH THAT
ACCURSED BLADE! AND DIG
A GRAVE FOR IT SOMEWHERE
OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF MY
FAMILY'S CASTLE! I AM
SORRY NOW I EVER
CAME TO THIS...

I FEEL THEM AGAIN!
BORING INTO MY
BACK! THOSE EYES...
THE JUDGE'S
EYES!

CAN FEAR DRIVE ONE TO THE DEPTHS OF SHOCK? YES! CAN THE SHOCK OF A SMALL CRIMINAL POOL... THE REMAINS OF A VANISHING CORPSE... DRIVE ONE TO THE PITS OF MADNESS? YES!

NO! HE IS DEAD! MUERTE... DEAD!

YOUUU!!
AAIIIIEEEEEE!!

MORNING IS A MEANINGLESS ELEMENT TO THE CONTINUALLY DARK, SHADOWY DUNGEON OF DEATH! IT INDICATES ONLY ANOTHER DAILY VISIT FROM ITS MORE INHUMAN MASTERS!

ODD THAT WE HAVE NOT YET ENCOUNTERED JUDGE FUERTE! HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ENTERTAINING A GUEST DOWN HERE LAST NIGHT, THOUGH! WHICH WOULD ACCOUNT FOR THE SCREAMING YOU HEARD! HA! HAA! I THOUGHT I GLIMPSED A TOUCH OF SADISM IN THE MAN!

IT IS TRUE, JUDGE GARCIA! AT MIDNIGHT, THE MOST EXTREME HOWLING CAME FROM THIS CHAMBER! I DID NOT SUMMON THE COURAGE TO ENTER TILL NOW!

WE'LL SOON LEARN THE CAUSE OF SUCH HOWLING! BE NOT AFRAID, EXECUTIONER! NO MAN OR GHOST DARES CHALLENGE THE OFFICERS OF THE INQUISITION!

THE HERETIC GIRL'S BODY IS EXACTLY WHERE WE LEFT IT, AND I SEE NO SIGNS OF...!

MY JUDGE! OVER HERE... IN THIS CORNER!

THE WILD-EYED, TIGHT-MOUTHED MANIAC STARES UNCOMPREHENDINGLY AT THE TWO INQUISITORS! EVEN THE GLOATING GARCIA IS UNNERVED BY THIS SPECIMEN OF TOTAL INSANITY!

LOOK AT THE MADNESS IN HIS EYES! I'VE NEVER SEEN...!

YOU! SPEAK! GIVE ME YOUR IDENTITY AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE!

EXCELLENCY! SOME PAPER
IS TACKLED ONTO THAT RACK!
IT LOOKS LIKE AN OFFICIAL
ORDER OF EXECUTION!

AN-HAAA! BRING IT TO
ME AT ONCE!

IT READS... "THE LUNATIC BEFORE YOU IS A
MURDERER! TWICE-OVER! HIS IS THE LOWEST
OF HEINOUS CRIMES! FOR NOT ONLY HAS HE
MURDERED, BUT IN ADDITION PERJURED HIM-
SELF IN THE COURTS OF SPAIN! GIVEN FALSE
TESTIMONY TO THE INQUISITION!"

"THE ULTIMATE SENTENCE IS DEMANDED!
LET SUCH A ONE SUFFER DEATH BY TORTURE!"
SIGNED, JUDGE HERNANDEZ FUERTE! NO! I
WAS NOT MISTAKEN! THE HONORABLE JUDGE
SHARES OUR VIEWS OF JUSTICE!
UNCHAIN THE PRISONER!

WHAT WEIRD, BIZARRE THOUGHTS OCCUPY THE MIND OF A MADMAN?
DOES HE ENDLESSLY RECALL THE SHOCKING, UNSPEAKABLE EXPERI-
ENCE WHICH CAUSED HIS STATE? DOES HE EVEN FEEL THE SENSATION OF
BEING ROUGHLY, BRUTALLY DRAGGED TO HIS FINAL DESTINATION?
ONE OF PAIN AND HORROR?

HIS TONGUE
HAS BEEN
CUT OUT!

I'LL USE MY FAVORITE INSTRUMENT ON
HIM! HE SHALL ENDURE HOURS OF UNENDURABLE
AGONY UNDER MY MANIPULATION! HE'LL BE MY
MASTERPIECE OF PAIN! BUT, WHY IS HE SO
SILENT? WHY DOESN'T HE SHRIEK, OR BABBLE,
OR BEG FOR HIS LIFE?

BECAUSE OF A
VERY STRANGE
THING I JUST
DISCOVERED,
EXECUTIONER!

HAA! HAA!
HAA! HAAA!

MAN--OFTEN DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN BORN OF TWO FATHERS! THE FATHER KNOWN AS NATURE, THE UNNERSE, LIFE AND... LOVE! AND THE FATHER KNOWN AS HORROR, NIGHT, BLACKNESS AND DEATH!

THE VAMPIRE... GAUNT AND EMACIATED IN HIS THIRSTING FOR HUMAN BLOOD, AND TREACHEROUS IN HIS TECHNIQUES OF TRAPPING HIS VICTIMS... IS OF THAT FATHER OF UNHEAVENLY ORIGIN! AND SO IT BE A FITTING MEMORY THIS TALE... THAT THE GROTESQUE CREATURE-BAT DIED A MERCILESS DEATH IN...

THE TIME! ANCIENT ROME... 126 B.C. UNDER THE RULE OF GAULS SEMPRONIUS GRACCHUS.

THE SETTING! THE GREAT ARENA... STADIUM OF MANY TRIALS OF COMBAT AND HONOR... NOW HOSTING THE ANNUAL CHARIOT RACE OF THE TRIBUNE'S FINEST HORSEMEN.

Vault of a Vampire

NIGHT HAS JUST FALLEN LIKE A SHROUD OVER THE THRONS OF SENATORS, TRIBUNES AND PEASANTS ALIKE. EACH MAN... IN EAGER AND EVER WATCHFUL EYE TO THE OUTCOME OF THE GREAT RACE... LIGHTS A FLAMING TORCH TO THROW VIOLENT SHADOWS ON THE PERSPICUOUS RACES OF THE PERFORMERS AS THEY DRIVE THEIR FEVERED HORSES...



WRITTEN BY ALAN HEWETSON BASED UPON BY SERGE MOREN

...DRIVING THEIR STEEDS AT A FRANTIC PACE AROUND A BEND! THE CROWD SUDDENLY FALLS QUIET AND A HUSH PERVADES THE ARENA AS A MAN LEAPS FROM THE HIGH WALL OF THE STADIUM AND LANDS WITH CRUSHING WEIGHT ON THE BACK OF THE LEAD RACER!



WITH MERCILESS AND UNRRASONING STRENGTH THE ATTACKER BATTLES THE CHARIOTEER, KNOCKING FROM HIS GRASP THE REIGNS AND FORCING HIM TO HIS KNEES...

ARE YOU INSANE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?..



AND THEN SLOWLY...IT IS MADE CLEAR TO THOUSANDS GATHERED IN THE STANDS JUST WHAT IT REALLY IS THE ATTACKER IS AFTER... BLOOD. WARM, RICH, FLOWING BLOOD FROM THE JUGULAR VEIN OF HIS VICTIM...FOR THE CROWD REALIZES ONLY TOO LATE THAT THEY ARE WITNESSING BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES A HIDEOUS ACT OF VAMPIRISM! THEY ARE POWERLESS TO ACT, FROZEN AT THE BIZARRE SPECTACLE UNFOLDING BEFORE THEM...THAT OF THE VILE CREATURE-BAT OF LONG LOST LEGEND SINKING HIS LONG GLEAMING FANGS AND SUCKING DRY THE LIFE-GIVING BLOOD OF AN INNOCENT MAN...POWERLESS TO ACT...FOR EACH MAN IS STRICKEN WITH THE SHUDDERING FEAR OF LUTTER DYN-BELIEF!





HE ESCAPES...TO ARMS
MEN... HE **MUST NOT**
ESCAPE!



LOOK...THROUGH THE
ARCH...SHADOWS
FLICKERING BY OUR
TORCHES!

SLING A SHOT
AT HIM, DAMON...
IN THE HOPE OF
STRIKING HIM
IN FLIGHT!



MISSED...THE
CREATURE ESCAPES
INTO THE BLACKNESS
OF NIGHT LIKE...
A DEMON!

AYE...BUT STILL...
LET US SEARCH IN THE
MOLLOWS YONDER...LEST
HE SILENTLY HIDES
BEHIND SOME
DECEITFUL ROCK!



WE'LL NOT FIND
HIM THERE...
TONIGHT...THE
MANY TREES
WOULD HIDE
HIM WELL!



TRUE...HE'S
DISAPPEARED...
BUT WE MUST
TAKE ACTION TO
PREVENT THIS
IN THE
FUTURE!

DAMON'S WORDS
HAVE GOSSIPING
MEN...THIS
CREATURE HAS
STUCK TOO OFTEN...
TOO SUDDENLY...TO
BE ALLOWED TO
CONTINUE!



AYE...THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME HE HAS STRUCK...
LAST MONTH IT WAS GENERAL PROCCIVUS... LAST
WEEK STUNNED HUNDREDS BY ATTACKING A YOUNG
WOMAN IN THE TRIBUNE'S OWN HANGING GARDENS!
WHERE WILL IT BE NEXT...THE SENATE ITSELF!



THAT FIEND IS
LIKELY TO SHOW
UP ANYWHERE!
BUT USUALLY, YOU
MIGHT NOTICE...
HE LIKES
CROWDS...

TRUE MARCUS...
HE MUST BE A
THRILL SEEKER...
OUT FOR MORE THAN
BLOOD ONLY...BUT
FOR PERVERSE
PLEASURE IN SEE-
ING MISERY IN
THE FACES OF
ONLOOKERS!

THEN WE MUST
BE READY...WE
MUST ATTEND EVERY
SOCIAL FUNCTION
WITHIN THE NEXT
FEW WEEKS...AND
WHEN THE MONSTER
ATTACKS...WE'LL
HAVE HIM!



IF HE'S HERE TONIGHT...
...AT THE PARTY OF
SENATOR CATTUS...HE
SHOULD STRIKE
BEFORE LONG!

THAT IS SO...BUT HE'S NOT BEEN
HEARD OF IN WEEKS...DO YOU
THINK HE STAYS IN HIDING
ALL THIS TIME?

IT'S POSSIBLE DAMON...
BUT STILL WE MUST BE
READY...IF HE EVER...
WHAT'S THAT NOISE...



HELP...

GET AWAY...
DARE YOU SEEK
SUCH A BEAUTY
AS YOUR
VICTIM?

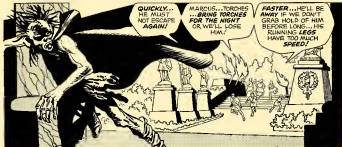
GET HIS HEAD...
PULL AT HIS
HEAD...HE'S AS
STRONG AS
AN OX!

AGAIN THE VAMPIRE STRIKES... AGAM HIS TEETH DIG DEEP
INTO THE NECK OF A HELPLESS VICTIM-- THIS TIME, A YOUNG
AND BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO HAD PREPARED TO CROSS HIS PATH--
AND SO ONCE AGAIN AN INNOCENT FALLS BEFORE THE TITANIC
DEBAUCHERY OF THE CREATURE OF EVIL.



AWE...HE
FIGHTS LIKE
A MADMAN
BUT...

UGHHH!



QUICKLY...
HE MUST
NOT ESCAPE
AGAIN!

MARCUS...TORCHES
...BRING TORCHES
FOR THE NIGHT
OR WE'LL LOSE
HIM!

FASTER...HE'LL BE
AWAY IF WE DON'T
GRAB HOLD OF HIM
BEFORE LONG...HE
RUNNING **LESS**
HAVE TOO MUCH
SPEED!

AGAIN HE MAKES WAY INTO THE NIGHT...FOR
THERE IN THE DARKNESS AND MANY RUNS OF
AN EMPIRE WILL HE FIND ESCAPE...PERHAPS
...OF CRIMINALS...HE'S NOT TOO
DETERMINED ON HIS CAPTURE!



AND YET IT SEEMS THAT
THIS NIGHT THE FIEND
HAS BEEN CARELESS...
HIS CRYPT--THE TOMB
OF HIS ETERNAL REST
IS CLOSE AT HAND TO
THE SCENE OF HIS UGLY
CRIME...AND BEING CHASED
HE HAS THOUGHTLESSLY
RETURNED TO HIS MANT
WITHOUT THINKING...WITH
OUT REALIZING HE HAS
LED HIS PURSUERS TO
HIS VERY FRONT DOOR...



LOOK...OVER
THERE...IN THE
FLEETING SHADOWS
...IS THAT NOT
HIM DESCENDING
INTO A VAULT?

IT MUST BE HIM!
THE FOOL...DOES
HE NOT REALIZE
HE HAS LED US TO
HIS VERY GRAVE?

FOOL IS RIGHT
...FOR BEFORE
LONG IT WILL
BE HIS GRAVE
FOREVER!

AYE...HE HAS INDEED TRAPPED
HIMSELF, FOR ALTHOUGH HE MUST
HAVE THE DOOR BOLTED ON THE IN-
SIDE...WE HAVE IT GUARDED
FROM THE OUTSIDE!

HE'LL NOT GET OUT
WITHOUT OUR KNOWING
...AND WHEN HE DOES
WE'LL BE ARMED...

MARCUS...RUN FOR
SILVER TIPPED
KNIVES AND SWORDS
...AND BRING FOOD,
TOO...WE'LL NOT
LEAVE THIS CRYPT
UNTIL HE HAS
EMERGED.

THAT SHOULD NOT BE
LONG...HE'LL HAVE NO
FOOD IN THERE...AND
SURELY HE CANNOT
SURVIVE LONG WITHOUT
IT...NOR WITHOUT HIS
THIRST FOR BLOOD!

IXRY AND LOW
FUM LONG
TOTUM...NA

AND SO STARTS A WAR FOR THE THREE
AVENGEURS OF SOCIETY...WAITING...
WATCHING...FOR A TERROR STRICKEN
BLOOD FRIEND TO GIVE IN... TO ADMIT
DEFEAT AND TAKE HIS CHANCES OUT-
SIDE! TO OPEN THE DOOR THAT BARS
OUT HATE AND REVENGE FOR HE AND
HIS KIND--OR...TO SUFFER A FATE
PERHAPS WORSE THAN THAT OF A
VIOLENT DEATH...THAT OF SLOW...
PAINFUL...AGONIZING...STARVATION
WITHIN!

HE
MUST
BE
DEAD!

AYE--IT'S BEEN OVER
TWO WEEKS...NO MAN,
NO MAN CAN LIVE
WITHOUT SUSTINANCE
FOR THIS LENGTH
OF TIME...

WE'LL
HAVE IT
IN A FEW
MOMENTS...

IT'S WELL BARRIED
FROM THE OTHER
SIDE...AND THE
WOOD IS THICK
AND HEAVY...

BY THE
ANCIENT
GODS...

OH...IN THE
NAME OF HUMANITY
...WHAT HAS
HAPPENED...WHAT
HAS HE DONE?

WE'D BEST
BREAK IN...
IF HE'S NOT
DEAD HE'LL BE
VERY WEAK...
IT WON'T BE
MUCH OF A
FIGHT!

HE'S STILL
STRONG...BE READY
...BE ON GUARD WITH
YOUR SWORDS...

OH GODS,
WHAT VILE
MOCKERY OF A
MAN IS THIS...
THIS...THING
BEFORE US?

WE CANNOT
VIEW THE
WRETCHED THING
IN THIS UTTER
DARKNESS!

BRING FORTH
MORE LIGHT SO
THAT WE CAN
SEEK OUT THIS
MENACE THAT
AFFLICTS US!

WHE
CREATURE...
WHAT MANNER
OF BEAST CAN
YOU BE?

DYE GLADLY
WE RELEASE YOU
FROM YOUR SEMI-
HUMAN VESTMENTS
OF LIFE...

HIDEOUS... IS IT POSSIBLE...
CAN IT REALLY BE THAT MY
EYES DO NOT DECEIVE ME...
CAN IT ACTUALLY BE THAT
THIS... THIS BLOOD DEMON
HAS STAYED ALIVE BY...
DEVOURING HIS OWN
BODY... HIS OWN
HUMAN FLESH!

AAAAUUUUU GHHHHH!

AND SO DEATH COMES
QUICKLY... PERHAPS FAR
TOO QUICKLY FOR HE WHO
HAS LIVED A LIFE OF
TERROR AND OUTRAGEOUS
ATROCITY... THE VAMPIRE...
GAUNT AND EMACIATED IN
HIS THIRSTING FOR HUMAN
BLOOD... IS OF THAT RATHER
ON UNHEAVENLY ORIGIN...
AND SO IT BE IN FITTING
MEMORY THIS TALE... THAT
THE GROTESQUE CANNIBAL
DIE AN UNDENIABLE DEATH
IN... WAULT OF A VAMPIRE!

SERG
ADREN

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Why is this poor victim
thrown in a lunatic cell
with Dracula?
Why does everyone scream

*let her
rot in hell!*



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- ILLUSTRATED TALES IN THE HORROR-MOOD -

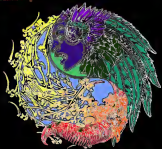
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